12/23/75

Mr. Martin Waldron
New York Times
229 W. 23 St.,
New York, N.Y. 10036

Dear Mo,

A few minutes ago I finished a short conversation with John Crewdson. I returned his call. I had been in Washington for a phlebitis checkup (the anticoagulent, although I am more mobile, is increased). Because I am still unable to drive that distance without being exhausted for several days, a side comment that I think will have relevance. I used the rather poor bus.

All John wanted to know is whether I had told him that CBS had paid Cliff Andrews for an interview. I had heard this. I have no independent recollection of having told John. Or you. Or anyone else. But I would have told anyone working on the story.

Because I had no independent recollection I told John I'd best go over what I recalled to see if it could bring back my source. I did this. He said that Rather denied paying Andrews. I do not recall the exact words. But I do know that while Rather may not have, others may have. The story I heard is that Andrews got $1,000 for the interview in New York, heisted a car in Canada, was rearrested near Calgary, and tried unsuccessfully to hit CBS again thereafter. In telling him the story I came to believe that my source was one who had been told this by one who said he had been told by Andrews.

As you know I have never believed any part of the Andrews story. John says he has in his note my having told him this story. The only sense in which I could have, having and to John's knowledge having no possibility of first-hand knowledge, has to have been for him to follow if it interested him. I have never met Cliff. I have never seen his picture. I have never had a letter or a call from him. In fact as I understand his approach, it specifically excluded me. I am sure John knows this. I am also sure that he knows I am pretty immobile and can t have first-hand knowledge. I am sure I told him I never believed the Andrews story from the first. And I can date my first knowledge precisely. I believe but I am not certain that this particular timing suggested certain possibilities to me and I may well have told John what they are.

As I say, John told me that Rather denied paying Cliff. I did not ask "did anyone else" or the other possibilities. I merely said that Andrews is a con man and if I had to make a choice between Rather's word and Andrews' I'd believe Rather. (To whom I've never talked and to whom I've written two letters about ethics, unanswered.)

John said this is all he wanted to know and that was the end of the conversation.

Once again his entire manner as well as his words troubled me. Even the way he put it to my wife when he called at 1:15 p.m., that he would like me to call him when I "reappear." She told me this when I walked in the door and the word is in her written reminder.

Maybe John is just trying to eliminate what he can eliminate from what he is working on. But the other possibility is why I write this, close to immediately, for the record. I tried to phone you and you were either not in or did not answer. It was approximately 5:30-5:45.

You know I wondered why the Times sent <u>three</u> reporters to Bud, knowing he had been too busy to be active in the case for some time, while not finding time to send one to the press conference I had to make available new FBI materials I obtained under FOIA. Now I wonder about this as it relates to me.

Neither, including John's "That's all I wanted to know," is consistent with straight journalism. Nor is indifference when the Times Washington Bureau got a release, hand-delivered, about my offer of this new evidence and it had the same thing on the city news wire.

Maybe this is much ado about nothing. Maybe it is just John's manner and some arcane journalistic concepts in your Washington bureau. I'm taking this time because I think there is a reasonable interpretation that it is not.

If you care to communicate this to anyone else at the Times, including what follows, please do.

My belief, which I'd rather have not be the fact, is that this is intended as an attack on me and for this use in the Times.

There is a long history between me and the Times and its attitude toward the side of controversial issues on which it and I are, its record and mine and its record with regard to me and my work as well as the facility with which it finds non-experts for defamations. More that under the circumstances I think it best not to tell you or anyone else. But I think if this comes to an issue, as it will if the Times defames me for doing no more than passing on a tip anybody past kindergarten should know could have been no more and was intended as no more, I will seek counsel. I think that with a long history it will cross the malice line, if it hasn't already. If it comes to this, as I once discussed with John in asking him to keep full notes on what he was learning, the Times will find that I have fairly full records that nobody at the Times has. (The occassion, by the way, was when John called me from California to tell me that the shrink to whom Ray went gave him an analysis that exactly coincided with the one that I had given John and that Gerold Frank had shown this shrink FBI reports denied the Ray defense even under the mandate of the 6th corcuit court of appeals, for a "full scale judicial inquiry," approx. We did ask for these things on discovery, as the court and our records will show, and were refused -long after they were made available to anyone of sycophantic predisposition. Thus a pr part of my C.A.75-1996.)

All of this began when I suggested the existence of a legitimate story to you. At that time I had never spoken to John. As you know I asked nothing in return. As I have since told you, from what I knew of you of the past I spent what for me is a considerable sum with no possibility of any kind of benefit to me in an effort to be as helpful as I could be to the Times. As you also know I have offered the Times, though you, exclusives where I have no conflict of interest and again asking nothing in return. When I have large debts and no regular income selfishness in this is not easily attributed to me.

As a matter of fact. I have also told you that John did not read Post Mortem when it was taken from you and given to him. Nor did he ever get back to me except for a single irrelevant question he phoned me from, he said, California. There is in this book accurate scientific data, knowledge of which he could use in the King case. He also did not tell me either that he had not completed this assignment or had been taken off of it, which limited and handicapped me, as we have discussed.

As of this minute I will stand on any representation I have ever made to anyone on the Times as a matter of my own personal knowledge, as distinguished from reports that reached me that I passed on under circumstances that make it obvious it could not be personal knowledge. Andrews is an example od this.

I write you not to involve you. But when I spoke to Hedrick Smith about two different things that by normal standards would be considered legitimate news, he told me, without any discussion with me, approximately, that he has trust in his men and leaves these matters up to them. Under this formulation I felt he did not want me to go further and I didn't. These had to do with the spontaneity of Levi's announcement of an "Investigation" (on which John told me Horrck would call-and Horrock didn't - and David Belin's agreement with me after our debate in asking a Congressional JFK investigation.

After supper. It has been about 10 days since John last called me. He then told me that the next day the DJ or FBI was going to show him what they have withheld from me since I filed for it 4/15/75 and sued for it when Levi did not respond to my 5/5/75 appeal some time ago. If John is the kind of reporter who has no questions about this and asked for no preparation for this examination, and from what he told me hadn't read what could have prepared him, that is his affair. If the Times is the kind of paper that goes into news seeking on major events in this unprepared manner or wants or directs of tolerates its people doing it, that is the Times' affair. But I did offer John preparation and I did address what the government was doing to the media in the press conference for which the Times had no staffer when it could spare three, after normal hours, to seek Bud out. That was taped and filmed and there will be no questions about facts or offers or selfishness. I went to all this trouble and then, to the press that did not have the gumption, offered it free.

I am reminded that when Clifton Daniels beat his breast and prayed to the high heavens over the Bay of Pigs and I wrote and asked for his full text I got no response. If the Times wants to the either the tail or the closest thing to the tail of errant officialdom, it surely has the right - if its nose works - to clamp the nose and serve this end.

(I'm reminded of 1957 and not Daniels but Daniell, when I was phoned in a hinterland as the only sober person who could be trusted - I was working what Daniell broke a woman's leg in trying to do what she did not want done. At 3 a.m. I couldn't get a doctor. I found a vet.)

But I did offer the Times what I knew, what I had and what I had just received that was relevant and then and thereafter, specifically in the previous conversation with John, and it was not fit to print whereas what I suspect seems to be, when it is not relevant in any representation of either a legitimate story of the facts of the case. And as you know I not only asked nothing for this, I didn't even ask your assurances of the recovery of my expenses when I undertook to help. I know of nobody on the Times who is not paid. I have had no regular income, certainly no salary, for more than a decade.

You, personally, know that I offered the Times exclusively what I obtained with no request for compensation. You know that there were other offers I made, had accepted, and asked no more than the actual xeroxing costs, to this day not paid.

There is nothing personal in this, as I'm sure you know. It is just that there is nobody else on this on the Times I have any reason to have faith in. I think it is a wretched business. I think also that when I am ill and can't keep up with work that is important to me it is abusive to take my time even when I'm asleep or supposed to be to get as close to the root of the federal tail as possible while pretending otherwise to me.

The State of Tennessee saw fit to dispense with Henry Haile's services in this case. The FBI saw fit to let Robert Frazier retire when he is younger and in better health than I. Neither of these developments seems to have been news fit to print. Not was it when Haile, in the presence of a witness, personally threatened me because of my work in this case.

If John's alleged checking of no more than an unconfirmed report I passed on is all of a sudden news when all else I have done is not, then we will have a situation about which I'll see what, if anything, I can do, when the time comes.

When I called Sunday and you were asleep I had several purposes. Those I recall have to do with offers without request for compensation for the work I made to you. By then I had received several approaches. While nothing may come of any, I felt obligated to inform you. Another had to do with an FOIA suit I'd never gotten around to

starting. I remembered it then, thought it could make a story, your youngest could have handled it, so I called to see if you wanted it. I have initiated it. There is no possible answer that does not hold the possibilities of a decent story.

To the reporter with whose employer there may be a real prospect I said that I had been asked to hang loose until the first of the year and had agreed. I also told him that I would, if his people develope an interest, wait only a few days after the first.

Nothing personal, Ao. Hopefully, this is a complete waste of time. But if I thought it was I'd not be wasting it.

Again interruptions. Bad timeplus.

If it is no more than an inept way of expressing himself John picked a very bad day for this kind of thing. I've been out of the hospital for two months. During that time the level of anti-coagulant prescribed, after a temporary reduction of a sixth, was today increased to what it was last week, three times the level prescribed when I was discharged. What I have can be not only serious but fatal. I've lost rest I require from John's thoughtlessness or arrogance. I asked and received and expect nothing for this. I'm prepared to try to be as helpful to anyone, including Times people, as I can be and without any quid pro quo.

But I'm not prepared to accept in silence any more of this kind of abuse, whether or not it ever appears in type. There may well be a limit to what I can do. But by now, as I think you have seen, there is no limit to what I am willing to try. I do not want to, but if I have to, I'll make a try. If I were not ill this would be the case. If what I suspect, nasty business contrived against Bud and me, turns out to be the reality, there is no illness short of what I do not expect, total incapacity, that will deter what effort I can and will make.

In none of this do I presume that you are or can control the Times. I write you for these reasons: I trust you as a more than competent reporter and as an honest man; there is nobody else with whom I have dealt on this story of whom I can honestly or reasonably say this (at the Times); and I think that someone there might want a paper of its reputation to be a bit more than a government asshole.

I hope Lil has time in the morning to read and correct this because I now won't and it will go out in the morning.

Hardly a way to wind up with the sincere hope that you have a good year ahead,

Sincerely,

12/23/75 P.S.

I'm sorry if I seem to be taking anger or disappointment out on you. This is not my intent. Amd I realize John can say that he was merely checking to see if I had something. However, that would have had more credibility at the time I passed the report on to him for him to investigate. It was a matter of no consequence to me or I'd have made a note of it and would have been able to get it out and read it. Likewise does it seem that at the time it appeared to be of no consequence to John, or he'd then have asked me my source or sources. Another is not imposaible and if it is true it would be a dependable source. At the time it just made no difference to me. CBS has a long history of this, paying people to talk. Even staging news. Always with bad people.

What does make a difference is that I can't think of a single decent, honest fair job of reporting on any political-assassination stories that originated with the Times' national desl or DC bureau. There have been infrequent decent reporting jobs, far less than was justified, by metro desk reporters.

At every time there seems to be some new information not favorable to corrupt government on this subject the national desk comes to its rescue. Its record of the suppression of what by normal standards are legitimate stories is incredible and incredbily long. regardless of who presides. Post Mortem, for example, and the less than honest way in which John dealt with me on it. If John knew his national desk wanted a story he'd have had no trouble finding one. I've sent you the appendix pages I had noted for him to make this easy.

For a dozen years it has been no more than an adjunct of corruption in government.

The exceptions are when someone like you worked on the King case. You can reread some of those stories with pride. So can Leiferman and others. In fact, this is one of the things John argued with me, when I said the contemporaneous repting was excellent. I can't think of anything he didn't argue with me except that the shrink confirmed by amateur analysis of Jimmy.

Again I lay awake last night after 3-4 hours of sleep. The prescribed pill didn't work. I knew I'd need it. Between dozing thereafter I did think about this. I suppose there are a combination of factors involved in the depth of my feeling. One is the traditional view I hold of the press and its responsibilities. Another is what I am certain all this corruption has done to the country, especially to the young. This kind of reporting/non-reporting becomes a new kind of McCarthyism. The corruptions spread and the same corrupters do the same in other areas and get away with it because the same press fails to espose/report it. The same John, too, when I told him he was being had on his Nosenko story. I was right. On another subject he'd have been anxious to check it out. On this he was satisfied he had good sources. Even though there came a time when he admitted he is aware that the government wants very much to get favorable stories in the Times. His diligence in defense of his calling and his paper's integrity is reflected in his not checking out a single one of these things about which he admitted an awareness of the possibility of deception. On no other story would he not if he had available means.

So I suppose all my feelings are magnified by what I see happening to the country. I see a growing authoritarianism made possible by the abdicating press. This boils down in individuals, who have sons and daughters. In time their sons and daughters, some, will come to understand and to feel what their fathers have done, not with respect and admiration. One minor incident of this is within my recent experience. The kids at Maryland had asked me to appear in a benefot for them to raise money so they could exercise their Constitutional rights. I agreed but said I couldn't drive there. Among themselves one volunteered. Nice kid. I'd never met him before. He wanted to stop off so his mother, who had read some of my work, could meet me. She is a war bride, apparently, who cherishes the great improvement she finds here. It happens that the father sells something we need and I said I'd buy it from him. What happened instead is that the father felt even an unknown relationship of purely commercial nature could interfere with his business with the government and ordered his son to drop out of that student group. The son had to do it. It was not easy on him. The others hold him in contempt. If it is but one minor tragedy it is symptomatic of what troubles me much in all of this. I've seen much of it over the years.